



Right to Life of Michigan

peaceful, life-affirming solutions

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To: House Judiciary Committee
From: Genevieve Marnon
Re: SB 147
Date: April 19, 2023

Madam Chair, members of the committee. My name is Genevieve Marnon, and I am the legislative director for Right to Life of Michigan. Right to Life works to promote programs and legislation that fosters respect and protection for human life from fertilization to natural death.

Thank you for giving me a few minutes to explain why SB 147 is bad public policy and should receive a no vote.

During the campaign leading up to the vote in November 2022, Michiganders were told that Proposal 3 would simply “restore Roe.” Governor Whitmer in her debate with Tudor Dixon said, “we have the opportunity to enshrine Roe into law by passing Proposal 3.” Yet, SB 147 would be a significant departure from the Michigan that operated under Roe v. Wade.

Senator Geiss, the sponsor, has characterized the bill as a necessary component of Prop 3. We are being told that the new constitutional amendment – which was supposed to just restore Roe - mandates the changes sought by SB 147. It does not. Roe never tried to force those opposed to abortion to pay for it.

Prop 3’s non-discrimination clause only applies to the state, not private employers. Yet, the Elliott Larsen law, and SB 147 will apply to ALL employers with 1 or more employees. So, all employers will have to provide the same “term, condition, or privilege” to an employee for abortion as they do for pregnancy/childbirth. Which means if they offer maternity leave, they could be forced to offer “abortion leave” for example.

SB 147 defines sex as “including but not limited to, pregnancy, childbirth, the termination of a pregnancy, or a related medical condition.” Under Roe, Michigan employers were not required to treat elective abortion the same as pregnancy and childbirth with regard to employee benefits. The current ELRCA law covers abortions due to medical necessity, yet the language proposed in SB 147 will now add elective abortions – those performed by one’s choice and not due to medical necessity to covered benefits.

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Right to Life of Michigan does not typically take a position on civil rights legislation; however, SB 147 clearly elevates abortion to the same level as childbirth, as if the choice of killing one's own unborn child were somehow equivalent to pregnancy and childbirth!

Senate bill 147 would not only cause some employers to violate their conscience by forcing them to provide their employees with "abortion benefits," but it could also violate the religious liberties of other employees who may now have to help subsidize abortion in their health insurance premiums. In addition, SB 147 could force all citizens of Michigan to pay for the abortions of others by circumventing the abortion insurance opt-out law which Right to Life of Michigan sponsored via a citizen's initiative.

Many religious organizations employ and work with individuals who have had abortions in the past, but they are not, and should not, be required to employ or continue to employ an individual that actively opposes the tenements of their faith, and the current version of SB 147 does not offer a religious exception or any accommodation for employers of faith or those with a conscious objection to abortion, including employers like Right to Life of Michigan. I urge you to either amend SB 147 to include religious and conscious exceptions or leave the ELRCA alone and vote no on SB 147.

Thank you.